

This large race migrates to Palâwan and Northern Borneo, and in both localities occurs with true *B. javanica*.

STREPSILAS INTERPRES (L.).

Turnstones were seen every day on the pebbly beach at Rocky Bay associating with the other migratory shore-birds and running about actively and tilting the small stones over with their beaks. On one occasion as many as eleven were counted together.

III.—Notes on the Auckland-Island Shag (*Phalacrocorax colensoi*). By Sir WALTER L. BULLER, K.C.M.G., D.Sc., F.R.S.

MR. H. O. FORBES, in his paper "On the Birds inhabiting the Chatham Islands," which appeared in 'The Ibis' for October 1893, describes, under the name of *Phalacrocorax rothschildi*, a Shag found at the Chatham Islands and in the south of New Zealand, separating it from *Phalacrocorax colensoi* and saying: "this species is at once distinguished by the approximation of the dark plumage of the head beneath the throat, leaving a comparatively narrow white stripe between them." He also makes the possession of both the white alar bar and the white dorsal spot characteristic of his new species.

In my opinion we have a good deal more to learn about the Shags inhabiting New Zealand and the adjacent islands; and I think Mr. Forbes was somewhat rash in characterizing a new species without further investigation.

The type of my *Phalacrocorax colensoi* was from the Auckland Islands; but (like all the other specimens collected there by Mr. Burton at a wrong season of the year) it was in old and faded plumage, with dingy colours. Quite recently, however, I have had an opportunity of examining a large number of skins, in good plumage, collected by Mr. Henry Travers at the Auckland Islands and on Campbell Island during the last cruise of the Government gunboat 'Hinemoa.' The examination of this collection has satisfied

me that Mr. Forbes's "characters" are of very little value. The form and width of the white stripe down the fore neck, the presence or absence of the alar bar and of the dorsal patch of white, are inconstant features, due apparently to age or season. It will probably be found, when we become better acquainted with the species, that the bird is carunculated at one season and not at another; for all the specimens brought by Mr. Travers (killed in May) are without caruncles on the face. They include adult birds, of both sexes, but presenting very different phases of plumage. In three of them there is a slight coronal crest, the feathers being acuminate and produced beyond the ordinary plumage of the head; in some the alar bar is very conspicuous, occupying the whole of the median wing-coverts, in others it is broken and irregular; in one of the birds it is wholly absent, whilst in another the only indications of it are a few scattered white feathers among the dark wing-coverts. Of the whole series only one presents the white dorsal spot. The white throat-stripe is very uncertain in character: in some of the specimens it widens gradually from the chin to the throat, whilst in one of them it is narrow and of even width in its whole extent; in some it is constricted in the middle, and in one of them the dark plumage of the sides of the neck almost meets above the breast, the white stripe being interrupted and broken. Out of the whole lot only one gives the wing-measurement of my type, namely, 10·5 inches. In all the others the wing, from the flexure, measures 11 inches. It will be seen, therefore, that even in this respect the species is variable.

The fact is that this Shag, like many others in all parts of the world, varies with age and season, and the only course, so far as I can see, is to make the characters of *Phalacrocorax colensoi* somewhat wider.